

Building the Digital Repository RACO West

Results from the NARA Study of RMA Implementations in Selected Federal Agencies



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BACKGROUND

- NARA Strategic Goal 1: “Ensure continuity and effective operation of Federal programs by expanding our leadership and services in managing the Government's records”
- For 2007: Conduct a limited study that explains how success occurs in implementing RMAs, and what factors contribute to failure in implementing RMAs

METHODOLOGY

- Five agencies selected for the main RMA study
- Four additional agencies interviewed regarding e-mail
- Questionnaire and site interviews
- Product demonstrations
- Also looked at one 'failed' project

STUDY OF E-MAIL MANAGEMENT

- Federal Records Council concern about how Federal agencies manage their “record” e-mail messages
- White House e-mail controversy
- Additional interviews conducted with agencies who use “e-mail archiving” software

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Success factors examined in terms of:

- PEOPLE
- PROCESSES
- TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Success factors - PEOPLE:

- Training provided
- Agency Culture
- Management & IT Support
- Doing research & getting outside advice
- User hand-holding
- Managing expectations

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Success factors - PROCESSES:

- Agency business
- Case management
- RM system in place

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Success factors - TECHNOLOGY:

- Some version of the software already purchased and in use in agency (e.g. EDMS)
- Agency had previous experience testing RMAs
- RMA successfully integrated with other applications/operating system
- Mature products with demonstrated track records were used in most cases
- Effective RMA documentation and user support were provided

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- For some situations, success is measured by the fact that, if the RMA was suddenly removed or replaced with a different tool, there would be an uproar from the users
- More than one way to implement an RMA

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS-E-MAIL

- Not all subject agencies use their RMA for managing e-mail
- Some use work-arounds till the next version of the software is released
- Those using e-mail archiving software are still trying to work out how to capture and classify (beyond just 'saving all messages')

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

- Not many surprises: no “magic solution”
- Implementing an RMA requires considerable planning, preparation, trial-and-error
- Relentless efforts by hard-working Records Officers have paid off
- Upper level support is essential, but also support from the “masses”
- Making the RMA easy-to-use helped win over users
- Current NARA and other guidance on ERMS was validated in this study
- Next: follow-on study in FY 2008

THANK YOU

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